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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

EXCISE 18

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November 28, 1980

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Dist to;
S/S(Bremer)
CODE T TO: Transition Team - Professor Pipes
RF(leb)

FROM: EUR - George S. Vest

SUBJECT: Your November 25 Request to EUR/SOV for Briefing Material

Attached is the material requested by you during your November 25 meeting with EUR/SOV, and subsequently formally tasked through Marc Grossman to Mr. Wayne:

-- Tab A: Material relating to Soviet Actions with respect to Poland;

-- Tab B: Material relating to Soviet actions with respect to the Iran/Iraq conflict;

-- Tab C: Samples of EUR/SOV/MULTI's work in other areas;

-- Tab D: An analysis of reciprocity in US-USSR exchanges before Afghanistan.

Drafted:EUR/SOV:MRPar[illegible]
11/28/80 x28040
Clearances:EUR/SOV:RECombs
EUR:RLBarry(substance)

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY AM Bolster DATE 5/28/95
RDS ☐ or XDS ☐ EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. REASON (S)
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Cat. A - Caption removed; transferred to O/FADRC
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Reviewed by: Jen Brogan

Date: 18 Sept 19 87

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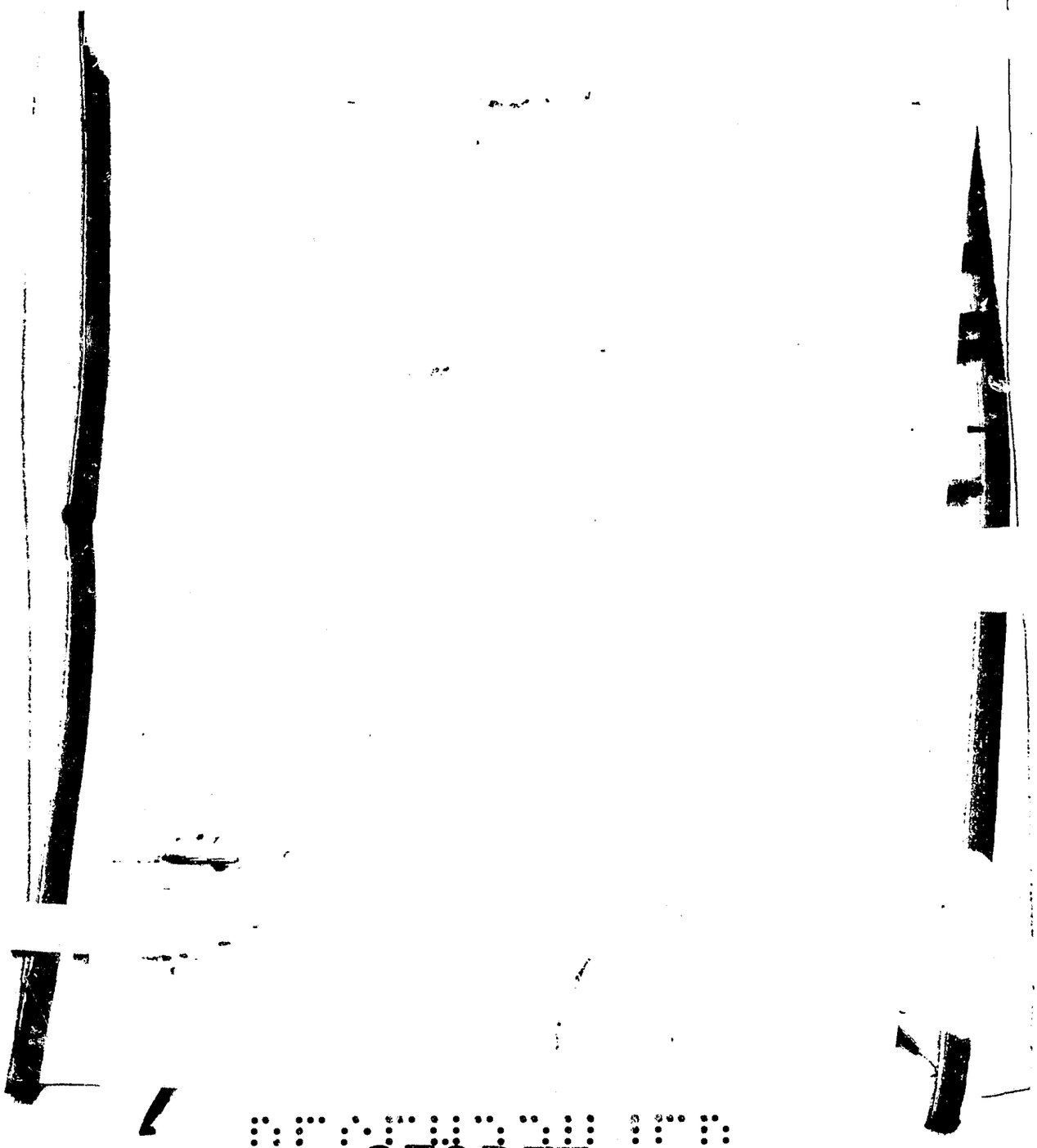

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OUTGOING TELEGRAM

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Cat. A - Caption removed; transferred to O/FADRC
Cat. B - Transferred to O/FADRC with additional access controlled by S/S
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Reviewed by: John Brogan
Date: 17 Sept 1987

S E C R E T STATE 261686

EXDIS

E.O. 12065: RDS-1 9/29/88 (CHRISTOPHER, WARREN)

TAGS: MOPS, PEPR, UR, IC, IR

SUBJECT: SOVIET RESPONSE TO IRAN/IRAQ WAR

REF: (A) MOSCOW 15238 (NOTAL); (B) SECTO 08928 (NOTAL)

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Tab B-1 NSDM E (p. 4, 5, 6-11)

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Soviet Union in the Middle East

The Middle East is a region of critical importance to Soviet foreign policy. Beyond the well-known factors of history, geography and resource distribution, the Soviet leadership probably sees the success of the USSR's Middle East policy as the litmus test of its drive for recognition as a global superpower. If Moscow cannot make good on its claim to an influential role in political and military developments in the Middle East, its demand to be included in other regional trouble spots and its assertion of global parity with the U.S. could begin to ring increasingly hollow. For this reason, the Soviets will give high priority to the achievement of the following objectives in the Middle East over the coming four years:

-- Development of long term bilateral relations with regional states which can serve as a durable foundation for influence in the region as a whole.

-- Continued use of the Arab/Israeli dispute to ensure Soviet influence in the region and involvement in any comprehensive settlement plan.

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-- Prevention of a return of U.S. influence to Iran or a revival of the U.S. position in the region more generally. If possible, further reduction of U.S. and Western influence throughout the region.

-- Protection of the USSR's borders against instability in Islamic states along the USSR's southern rim.

-- Commercial access to the energy resources of the Middle East for the countries of Eastern Europe and, to a lesser extent, for the USSR itself. This objective will take on increasing importance during the coming decade of energy stringency in the USSR and political/economic turmoil in Eastern Europe.

-- Access to military facilities in the Middle East to permit the more effective forward deployment of Soviet naval and air power in the region.

Prospects for Soviet Influence

Over the past twenty-five years of intense effort, the USSR has developed a number of important political and military assets in the Middle East. Through consistent support of the radical Arab regimes and the PLO, the USSR HAS OFTEN SUCCESSFULLY EXPLOITED the Arab/Israeli dispute to enhance its

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own influence in the region. Soviet political efforts have been supported by the deployment of air and naval forces in the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean and on the territories of a number of Soviet allies in the region. The invasion of Afghanistan brought Soviet combat forces to within 350 miles of the Strait of Hormuz and placed the Soviets in position to exploit opportunities which might be presented by future turmoil within Iran or Pakistan. Moreover, the invasion of Afghanistan demonstrated that the Soviets are willing to use force beyond their borders to influence political/military developments in the region. The proximity of an increasingly powerful and assertive USSR to a region of critical importance to the industrial democracies represents a major challenge to vital U.S. interests.

Despite these well known Soviet strengths, the Soviet leadership cannot be confident of its ability to accomplish its objectives in the Middle East. In fact, the Soviet political/military posture in the region is beset by a number of dilemmas and difficulties which could translate into increasing Soviet vulnerability over the next few years. Among the most important problems facing the USSR are:

-- Weakness of Key Alliance Relationships: The Iran/Iraq war

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has again demonstrated the limited usefulness of the USSR's alliance ties in the region. Iraq's decision to launch the Persian Gulf war without prior consultations with Moscow, the Soviet failure to support Iraq politically and militarily, and the Soviet decision to sign a treaty with Syria have combined to reduce relations between Moscow and Baghdad to the lowest point since the Soviet/Iraqi treaty was signed in 1972. While the relationship may not come to a formal break, the Baghdad/Moscow alliance may well have been permanently undermined.

The new Soviet/Syrian treaty may, to some extent, offset the decline in Soviet/Iraqi relations. The treaty represents a Soviet effort to place its relations with Damascus on a durable, state-to-state basis which could survive a transition of power in Syria. B-1 (d)(5)

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